The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 5 MAY 2017

May Services

Sunday Morning Services are at 10:00 a.m.

May 7

"Human Creativity"

The acclaimed dancing and drumming ensemble from Central Falls, led by founder Deanna Camputaro, will perform.

May 14

Mysteries and Myths About Motherhood – *Rev. David L. Helfer*Do single people mother? What about men? What if I have two mothers or no mothers at all?
Today we will gather to honor those from all walks of life who mother us.

May 21

An Interfaith Gathering to Affirm Religious Freedom – Rev. David L. Helfer Members of the Bah'ai, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian Universalist faiths share perspectives and thoughts on the very notion that the fine state of Rhode Island was founded upon: religious freedom.

May 28

My Feminist Experience: The Personal *Is* Political – *Mara Trachtenberg* Feminism helps Mara understand how gender equality issues influence how she raises her daughter, how she relates to her husband, how she views the world, and which social justice causes she fights for.

Mara Trachtenberg teaches photography, digital art and Gender and Women's Studies at the Community College of Rhode Island and URI.



THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Karen R. Ellsworth, Editor

Deadline: The 20th day of each month Material should be submitted by e-mail to <u>kellsworth6@verizon.net</u>

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

www.uusouthcountyri.org

Our Home is at Lily Pads Professional Center 27 North Road, Peace Dale, R. I. 02879 (401) 783-4170 • uucscri@yahoo.com

Services and Children's Religious Education on Sundays at 10 a.m. We welcome all individuals without regard to race, color, physical challenge, sexual orientation, age, or national origin.

Staff Members

REV. DAVID L. HELFER, MINISTER

Office telephone: (401) 284-3321 • e-mail: <u>uucscminister@gmail.com</u>

Pam Santos, Religious Education Director ■ **Michael Galib**, Music Director Church Office

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. ■ Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. ■ Friday 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Board of Directors

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David Floyd, Music at Lily Pads Coordinator • Johnnie Rodriguez, Worship Committee
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At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



Many of you have asked what I believe, and have wondered out loud what my spiritual practices are and how they sustain me.

And you're right to ask.

Part of me did not want to share that information at first, wishing to begin by evidencing that I will guide you as best serves each and every one of you, as well as the congregation as a whole. That means hearing what you need rather than leading with my understanding of divinity.

But since you asked, I'm happy to share.

I think by now it is clear that I am "filled" by being in nature. Water, even the sight of it, does something to my heart that I am unable to explain. I am both at peace and connected to the larger world, almost instantaneously. For me, sunlight on water is g-d.* (Whatever word I use here will be insufficient. Call it g-d or Spirit or Gaia; it matters not.)

What I do know is that there is more than myself alone. This is a core belief, and part of why I chose to serve as minister in a congregational setting. More on that another time.

I also feel that sensation of Spirit in the most unexpected places. I have been in massive Catholic cathedrals more than three hundred years old and in tiny, almost inconsequentially small "house churches," and in both places I have experienced a sensation so strong that it almost scared me. My logical mind told me that what I felt was the accumulated energy released by the hope, love and fear in so many thousands of prayers. But what do I know?

My faith is that I don't know. I don't know what happens after we die. I don't know if there is a singular being to call g-d or whether that divinity simply lives inside each of us.

It is that letting go where I find hope, where I find connection. It is when I admit how little I control, and open myself to what might be, that I know there is more.

So, my spiritual practice is simple; it is quieting my mind. Meditation, being in nature, writing, sitting quietly. And any physical activity. Like any other kid, when my hands are busy, my mind opens. I hear more, and talk less.

For me, life is an endless opportunity for tapping into that energy, wherever and however we find it. Song, dance, service, play. It isn't the how that matters, or how well we think we conduct ourselves, but simply the act of opening ourselves to the possibilities.

With excitement at what we might find, and, always, with love,

Rev. David

^{*} In some ways, my Jewish upbringing remains with me. Jews do not write the name of g-d. They sometimes use "g-d" as a substitute for naming the Divine One directly.

The President's Letter

Leadership, UU style

This year, as last year, I took the opportunity to travel to the New England Regional UUA Assembly, this year in Woburn, Mass. More than 350 New England members and pastors of UU churches, large and small, attended. As President of UUCSC, I feel that it is important to have a presence at such important regional events, to share news and ideas from our own church, to learn about other churches, and to meet new and interesting fellow UUs. Most importantly, I believe that it is by getting out of our own UUCSC comfort zone and trying on new hats and new perspectives that we can better prepare ourselves for the tasks of leadership.

Successful leadership in any organization requires clear focus on the destination on the horizon, and a steady hand on the tiller. But it also requires flexibility to adjust to the unexpected or unanticipated, and a willingness to make mid-course corrections (thank you, Kathy Swink, for your inspirational message last Sunday). To develop a broad perspective of our own and larger UU-related issues, it is extremely helpful to look over, and to reach beyond, our own four walls.

During the past several years, I have been making a special effort to visit and attend services at as many other UU churches as I am able. When I am traveling or attending professional conferences, I check to see if there's a UU church nearby, and make it a point to get up early enough on Sunday morning to attend the service. Recently I have visited churches in Savannah, Georgia; San Marcos, Texas; Brewster, Mass.; Madison, Conn.; and Bell

Street Chapel in Providence. I've learned something different through each visit. It is wonderful to experience the many ways that other congregations conduct services, to learn what it is that they hold dear, and to catch a view of our UU faith through others eyes. If you haven't gone to a different UU church in a while, I encourage you to put it on your to-do list. You'll love it.



As you can see, I certainly believe that a variety of experiences can really help an individual develop as a leader by broadening perspectives and developing greater willingness to enrich a personal or shared vision with new and varied viewpoints or ideas. I have served in leadership roles in many professional organizations in the field of education during the past 40 years. (Yes, I just realized that I have been in this field that long . . . Pheeeeeew! That's a long time.) However, the experience of serving as president of the UUCSC has been unique. I served with two wonderful UUCSC presidents as a board member, first with Nancy Rose and then with Steve

Harrison. Both had their own special style and talents. I learned a great deal from both of them. But what I have come to realize on my own is that being president of UUCSC involves recognizing that the business of a church is emotion.

Our feelings and emotions drive our desire to be at church each Sunday. Our need to connect spiritually and emotionally with others builds and sustains this community. Our desire to have a positive impact on life and lives binds us together in the causes that we share. As a strongly pragmatic person, it took me a little while to fully recognize emotion as the underlying foundation of our work. But once I came to this "ah-ha" moment, I believe I became a better UUCSC president. It helped me to listen more, to consider things with greater depth, to truly honor the value of diversity, and recognize the importance of "taking a breath." Don't get me wrong—there is a whole lot of practical, no-nonsense, task-oriented work that goes along with being UUCSC president.

But at the heart of it all is recognizing and caring about, and caring for, the emotional health of each one of our UUCSC members and friends. It is a substantial task, but a greatly rewarding one, as well.

There are many different paths to leadership. At UUCSC, becoming involved in a group or committee that connects with your emotional reasons for coming here is a good place to start. Whoever you are, you have interests, ideas, talents, and feelings to share with others. On Sunday mornings, we participate

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Meet UUCSC's New Religious Education Director

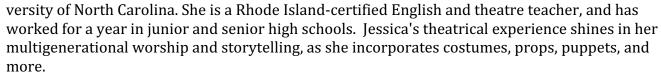
The Personnel Committee and a committed search team consisting of Susan Pavlow, Nancy Dean, Sally Barney, and Barbara Pagh have found a wonderful new Director of Religious Education, Jessica Zebrine Gray.

Having served two congregations as a religious educator for ten years, Jessica is a creative force

in curriculum development and multigenerational worship. She is the author of five UU curricula— Creating Hogwarts Magic, a guidebook for Harry Potter camps; Jedi Academy Coming of Age; Neo-Pagan Sabbats for Spirit Play; Summer Magic, a short-term Harry Potter program for grades 3-5, and Let the Force Be With You, a short-term Jedi Academy for grades 3-5.

Jessica directed an original Hogwarts-themed summer camp in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 2005, and since then she has recreated the camp in three other locations. She hopes to bring the camp to UUCSC beginning in summer 2018.

Jessica earned her Ph.D. in theater at Louisiana State University, her M.A. from Florida State University, and her B.A. from the Uni-



As a Unitarian Universalist, Jessica has deeply engaged with all six sources of our living tradition: She has the most training and experience in Buddhism, modern Paganism, and liberal Christianity, but she has also studied Judaism, Hinduism, and mythology of all cultures.

She lives in Warwick with her daughter, Ariana, and three of her closest friends. Four adults and one child is an excellent ratio. It truly does take a village!

Jessica and Pam Santos will share the DRE job from mid-May through the end of the congregational year. Jessica will formally become of Director of Religious Education in August, when the rest of the staff returns from summer holidays.

Please join us in welcoming Jessica to UUCSC! - In joy, Rev. David

Meet Jessica on Saturday, May 13 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at a Meet and Greet here at church.

The President's Letter

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together in worship, but primarily
this is a personal and individual experience. We connect each week
during coffee hour, but this falls far
short of the personal connections
that can be developed by joining a
group or a committee and working
together toward some shared goals.
We all have our own special gifts
lying inside, waiting to be shared
and appreciated by others. When we

step forward to take part, we step closer to finding ways to fulfill our emotions. Sign up for Small Group Ministry, join the choir, dig in our garden, greet people on Sundays, raise money for the church, serve the children in RE— do whatever your heart leads you toward. Honestly, not only will UUCSC benefit from your gifts, but you will benefit as well. You will feel more con-

nected and more fulfilled— and this is what feeds our emotional selves. And when you feel ready, step forward into leadership. We need leaders who care about our community, our church, and our eclectic congregation of individuals— and this can be you. This is you! All you need to do is to take the first step.

In faith and love,

Betsy Dalton

Welcome to our newest members

On Sunday, April 9, we welcomed seven new members to our congregation. Our New Member ceremony was particularly special because it was led by Rev. David, who was installed as our settled minister on March 26. Here's what the new members said when asked why they joined:



Diane Fogarty (left): "I've been attending services with this congregation for several months and have found that the guiding principles espoused by its members have provided me with a new sense of community and a renewed sense of purpose as I look forward to the remaining years of my life."

Johnnie Rodriguez (right): "After working to regain my physical and emotional health after a cancer journey, I realized I needed a spiritual component, a community of welcoming and compassionate people that I might find at UUCSC. I was right."



Bill Rodriguez (left): "Like a lot of people, I was much in need of community the weekend after Sandy Hook. Unlike most people, I had available the loving community at this church, which my wife had been attending for some time. I came, I shed some tears, and I remained an atheist in a kind of weekly heaven, worthier of the name than the conventional definition, I believe."

Kari Kurto (right): "Ever since my first UU service just over a year ago, I've felt the inner peace that comes from finding a spiritual home I never knew was missing. Being surrounded weekly by like-minded spirits who are intelligent activists filled with love is one of the best gifts ever bestowed on me."



April Ruedaflores (left): "As a young girl, I was always curious about my mind, body and soul. Having grown up a Catholic, I didn't understand how the repetition of someone else's words and experiences were to make me whole. What I discovered over the past year is that it's this church, this community that respects my personal religion, growth and truth."

Etta Zasloff (right): "I feel inspired at UUCSC to pursue my own spiritual path without judgement; I want to join this congregation because I feel love abounds here, for each other and all people."













Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

Inviting you to help with next year's RE programs

It's that time of year when the RE Committee looks ahead to next year to develop the very best programs for the youth and children of UUCSC. To create wonderful programs, we need wonderful support. We will be reaching out to you with hopes that you will spend some time with the children next year.

In the past, when I've asked folks to consider volunteering with our RE programs, here are some of the responses I've heard:

"I work with children. I don't want to volunteer with them, too."

"Oh, I helped out when my kids were younger."

"I go to Florida in the winter, so I can't help."

"I don't know much about UU theology. I wouldn't know what to teach."

"I'm new to this church. I'm just learning."

"Don't the parents take care of that?"

When I ask the same question during the next few weeks, here are the responses I hope to hear:

"Yes. When my kids were younger, others helped out, so now it's my turn to help."

"Yes, I know I'll get plenty of support when I help with the children."

"Yes, I'm only traveling for one month, so I can help when I return."

"Yes, I look forward to meeting the young families in our congregation."

"Yes, I know I'll learn more about my UU faith as I teach the kids."

"Yes, I want our congregation to attract families."

When you are asked to help with the children, please consider your response. Spending some of your Sunday mornings with the youth and children of this congregation may have a surprising effect on your understanding of service, of ministry, and of church. We look forward welcoming you to next year's religious education programs.

Upcoming dates in RE

Sunday, May 7 - "Human Creativity," the Central Falls drumming and dancing ensemble, will perform at the service. The children will be upstairs.

A letter to the congregation from David Floyd

To my friends at UUCSC,

4/19/17

You may have heard that the Music at Lily Pads music series, active since the fall of 2010, is in transition. I am stepping down as director of the series after October of this year. We will have done close to 90 events and hosted musicians from Rhode Island, all over the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Poland, and Spain. In a great cooperative effort between our all-volunteer committee, many very talented artists, and our exceptional audiences (including many of you), we have put our sometime-venue on the map as a place to go in Rhode Island for fine live music.

I have discussed this transition with the UUCSC Board, and the hope is that the series will continue in some form, with someone else from the congregation at the helm. I would gladly assist with sharing resources, such as booking information, artists interested in performing, offers to artists and negotiating, publicity, ticketing, information about our sound and lighting equipment and more. I am happy to speak with anyone interested in exploring what is involved with taking this on. We have a really good thing here; but after seven years of running the program, I feel the need to pass the torch.

You may have heard rumors that I have moved the Lily Pads series over to the Pump House, the guitar building school and music venue on Kingstown Road. That is not the case. I volunteer there for some concerts, and have assisted Dan Collins and Ariel Bodman, the owners, with some occasional bookings, but their concerts are on a different scale than what is happening at MLP. Their main room capacity is less than half what is possible in our sanctuary. Some bookings that have occurred at The Pump House are with artists who wanted to play Lily Pads, but did not have the ability to fill a room our size. The amount of work required in setting up the sanctuary and taking down after an event made the organizing of certain events prohibitive.

That being said, we have a couple of special events coming up at Lily Pads, and I certainly hope our friends at the UUCSC will support them. Our *Celebration of Pete Seeger* is on May 6, we have a visiting musician/activist *Paul Baker Hernandez* from Nicaragua coming for a special luncheon concert and talk on Sunday May 7, and the beloved band from Quebec, *Genticorum*, will return on Saturday, October 7. Please support these concerts. As has always been the case, your participation in these events as an audience sustains and supports the work of UUCSC. I will not be booking additional events, but hope and pray that a dedicated UU member or committee will jump in and keep this great series going.

Many, many thanks to all of you who bought tickets to our events, and continue to share in this adventure. Thanks to Harry Buffum for starting this program, and for all he has done for the proliferation of live music in South County. Thanks to our amazing volunteers, including Bob and Gabrielle Torphy, Eileen DiMaio and Pete Burton, Tina Toomey, Mary Lynne Rainey, Adrien Vendetuolli and many more. Many thanks also to UU members/MLP sponsors Nancy Rose, Clare Sartori, Aline Couture and Jean Burke. I continue to be grateful to have had this very special opportunity, and the privilege of seeing this program grow and prosper, and of knowing we continue to provide a venue for fine musicians from near and far.

Best wishes, David Floyd

A note from the UUCSC Board of Directors

If you are interested in helping to continue Music at Lily Pads, or if you'd like to be part of a group to envision what a future music or performing arts program might look like at UUCSC, please speak with any UUCSC Board member, and we will help things get rolling!

We sincerely thank David Floyd and his MLP volunteers for the many years of dedicate service they have given us in establishing, leading, and managing the MLP concert series. We wish David only the very best! Now, let's move forward to a new era of music, and possibly more . . .

Your Board – Betsy, Linda, Steve, Mary, Elise, Randi, Leah, Sally, and Natalie

Bequest from the late Richard Evans

It is with thanks and best wishes to the family of Richard Evans that we acknowledge the receipt of an unrestricted bequest to UUCSC for \$4,000 from the Estate of Richard Evans.

Before Rich passed away in 2013, he was an active and vital member of our UUCSC congregation for many years, providing leadership in our 2008 capital campaign among other efforts.

Those of us who knew Rich know that planned giving was very close to his heart. This gift will contribute significantly to our financial stability this year, and we are very grateful that he remembered UUCSC in his will. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

If you wish to make a bequest as part of your estate planning and have questions, please contact a member of the Finance Committee or Rev. David. Please consult with your own estate and financial planners for advice. — Marcia Boyd, Finance Committee Chair

Spring edition of Dining for Dollars kicks off Sunday, May 7

The Spring 2017 edition of the famous Dining for Dollars fundraising auction will begin after the service on Sunday, May 7 and conclude at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 14.

As always, there is something for everyone. Descriptions of the events will be posted on our website and at the bidding site, and will be available in booklet form starting Sunday, April 30.



Bidding will take place outdoors if the weather permits; otherwise, bidding will take place in the Oneto Community Room.

Some favorite events— the grilled pizza garden party, the Patriots tailgate gathering, the seafood dinners, horses, and garden feasts— will be offered again, along with some family-friendly and affordable offerings. Not going to be in attendance either Sunday? Not a problem! Nancy Rose will take you bid by e-mail or phone up to the last minute.

If there's a special event you definitely want to attend, you might want to guarantee your seat by splurging on the "It's

Yours" bid amount— a way to be sure you'll have a place at the table.

Keep in mind that this is our biggest and most successful fundraiser for the congregation. So far, Dining for Dollars has raised more than \$50,000. Check out the events, and remember to watch your bid! - Nancy Rose

Annual Spring Plant Sale on Sunday, May 21

The Annual Spring Plant Sale will take place on Sunday, May 21 before and after the service. If you have extra plants that you'd like to donate, please pot them right away. If you have spaces in your garden you'd like to fill, be sure to check out the offerings. Need pots? Have questions? Helene Gersuny is the person to speak to.



Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County is our next Share the Plate recipient

The Social Justice Team has recommended the Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County as the recipient of our May and June Share the Plate collections.

The DVRCSC is a nonprofit agency that works to build a community in which each



individual shares responsibility for creating a culture of safety and personal dignity. They work with individuals to avoid or break cycles of violence, to choose safety over fear and to prioritize healthy relationships.

A representative from the DVRCSC's Residential Program will attend the service on June 4 to give a brief description of the services offered. Our donations will help the DVRCSC provide food,

household goods, and transportation for their clients.

Share in the care of our church home

Our Facilities Committee needs participants to share in stewardship of our building. Here are some of the tasks on the committee's current to-do list. Maybe you can help!

- Can you clean and silicone the gutters at the front of the building?
- Can you assemble the new bookcase for Rev. David's study?
- Can you replace the batteries in the emergency exit signs?
- Can you paint the Minister's Study? The foyer? The choir room?
- Can you trim the shrubs at the front entrance?
- Can you remove the half-dead tree in the garden at the front entrance?
- Can you install a shelf in the kitchen stairwell storage area?
- Can you hang bulletin boards in the hallway?
- Can you repair the rust damage on the RE doors?
- Can you help make an inventory and storage list?
- Can you help improve our storage arrangements in general?
- Can you learn how to check the boiler?

This list will be posted on the Facilities bulletin board in the Oneto Community Room.

If you can help out with any of these tasks, or if you would like to be on the list of people who can take care of regular small projects or tasks, please get in touch with Sally Barney (sbarney07@aol.com).



Take a ride after church

Get your bikes out and join the Wellness Team for a bike ride after church on any Sunday with fair weather between now and June 18. Bike riders will leave from the far end of the parking lot at about 11:30 a.m. The plan is for a moderately-paced ninety-minute ride, but that plan can be modified depending on who shows up. If you have questions, please contact Sarah Bell at 284-1819 or sarahbell@earthlink.net.

We have a new office administrator

Karen St. Peter is our new office administrator.

Karen is a native Rhode Islander, and has lived in Rhode Island most of her life. She graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in Human Development and Family

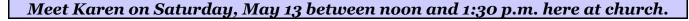
Studies in 1996, and has experience working in the pharmaceutical industry, in electronic discovery and in social services.

After years of working mostly in a corporate environment, Karen decided to return to a career that is more aligned with the causes she considers most important in life— community support, peace, helping those in need and supporting an environment that provides spiritual health. She is very excited to begin working at UUCSC.

Karen's interests include painting, jewelry making, spending time at the beach, hiking, paddle boarding, gardening, Reiki, reading and writing. She recently became a member of the board of trustees of the Ashaway Free Library in Hopkinton.

Karen lives in Hopkinton with her husband Erik and daughters Madeline, 14, and Sofie, 12, as well as four cats, a dog and a painted turtle.

She will begin her new job on Tuesday, May 9. - Rev. David



Nicaraguan Social Activist Paul Baker Hernández performs Sunday, May 7

Paul Baker Hernández, a singer-songwriter and political activist who lives in Nicaragua, will perform at a potluck lunch and concert at noon on Sunday, May 7.

Baker Hernández is known for his interpretations of the work of Víctor Jara, the Chilean musician murdered during the Pinochet regime. He performs songs written by Jara and songs he has written that were inspired by Jara's work.

The event begins at noon with a potluck lunch. Please bring a favorite dish, a non-alcoholic beverage, dessert, and your own plate, cup and cutlery.

Women of Wisdom meet for lunch on the first Monday of every month

All UUCSC women are invited to join the Women of Wisdom (WOW) at their luncheons on the first Monday of each month. The May lunch is on Monday, May 1 at 12:30 p.m. at The Cove Restaurant on Old Post Road (Route 1A) in



Charlestown, across the street from the post office. If you's like to know more about the WOW lunches, get in touch with Linda Whyte Burrell.

UUCSC men meet for a manly breakfast on the first Saturday of every month

Ed Burrell and the guys meet for a men-only breakfast on the first Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. The next Men's Breakfast is on Saturday, May 6 at Mia's Kitchen, 99 Fortin Rd., Kingston, in the Kingston Emporium, next to the URI campus. All UUCSC men and their friends are invited. To

find out more, get in touch

with Ed.

The Unitarian Universalist Co 27 North Road Peace Dale, RI 02879	ngregation of South County
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED	
"Do not go where there is no path a	the path may lead, go instead where nd leave a trail."
	– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Emerson (1803-1882), the Unitarian essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century, was born in Boston on May 25, 1803.